

Claims

What is claimed is:

1. A method for profiling an iTV user, comprising:
 - gathering user-requested content information from iTV interactions;
 - correlating content-associated profile information from a rating service with the user-requested content information; and
 - developing a profile of the user based on the content-associated profile information correlated with the user-requested content information.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the content-associated profile information contains demographic information.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein the content-associated profile information contains psychographic information.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein the user-requested content information is a program.
5. The method of claim 4, further comprising receiving a database associating a plurality of programs with content-associated profile information of viewers of the programs.
6. The method of Claim 5, wherein said database is developed by a television program ratings service.
7. The method of Claim 5, wherein gathering user-requested content information comprises identifying program requests made by the user while watching television.

8. The method of Claim 7, wherein developing a profile of a user comprises combining the profiles of the programs viewed by the user to the existing user profile using an averaging algorithm.

9. The method of Claim 1, further comprising receiving a plurality of advertisements along with desired viewer profiles.

10. The method of Claim 9, further comprising presenting at least one of the advertisements based on the user's profile.

11. The method of Claim 1, further comprising delivering program recommendations to the user based on the user's profile.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein the user-requested content information is a program and a URL.

13. The method of claim 12, further comprising receiving a database associating a plurality of programs with content-associated profile information of viewers of the programs and associating a plurality of URLs with content-associated profile information of visitors to the URL address.

14. The method of Claim 13, wherein the information in the database is developed by a television program ratings service and a Web site ratings service.

15. The method of Claim 14, wherein gathering user-requested content information comprises identifying program requests made by the user while watching television and identifying URLs requested by the user.

16. The method of Claim 15, wherein developing a profile of a user comprises combining the profiles of the programs viewed by the user and profiles of the URLs accessed by the user to the existing user profile using an averaging algorithm.

17. A set-top box for profiling an iTV user, comprising:

a memory for storing a program; and
a processor operative with the program to:
(a) gather user-requested content information from iTV interactions;
(b) correlate content-associated profile information from a rating service with the user-requested content information; and
(c) develop a profile of the user based on the content-associated profile information correlated with the user-requested content information.

18. A computer readable medium comprising instructions for profiling an iTV user by performing the acts of:

gathering user-requested content information from iTV interactions;
correlating content-associated profile information from a rating service with the user-requested content information; and
developing a profile of the user based on the content-associated profile information correlated with the user-requested content information.

19. A method for targeted advertising to an iTV user, comprising:
receiving a plurality of advertisements, wherein each of the advertisements includes advertising information containing instructions with desired iTV user profiles for the advertisement;
using a developed user profile along with the desired iTV user profiles from the plurality of advertisements to determine which of the plurality of advertisements to present to the iTV user as a targeted advertisement; and
presenting the targeted advertisement to the iTV user.

20. The method of claim 19, wherein the acts of receiving, using, and presenting are carried out in a set top box of the iTV user.

21. The method of claim 20, further comprising:

developing the developed user profile by gathering user-requested content information from iTV interactions, correlating content-associated profile information from a rating service with the user-requested content information, and developing the developed user profile based on the content-associated profile information correlated with the user-requested content information.

22. A method of profiling an iTV user, comprising:

providing profiles on a plurality of iTV programs;
monitoring which of said plurality of iTV programs the user accesses; and
developing a profile of the user based on the profiles of the iTV programs accessed by the user.

23. The method of claim 22, wherein the profile of the user contains demographic data.

24. The method of claim 23, wherein said demographic data includes data on the user's age.

25. The method of claim 23, wherein said demographic data includes data on the user's gender.

26. The method of claim 23, wherein said demographic data includes data on the user's income.

27. The method of claim 23, wherein said demographic data includes data on the user's highest attained education level.

28. The method of claim 22, wherein the profile of the user contains psychographic data.

29. The method of claim 28, wherein said psychographic data includes data on the user's interests.

30. The method of claim 22, wherein providing profiles on a plurality of programs comprises providing a database associating each of said plurality of programs with demographic characteristics of known persons who have accessed said sites.

31. The method of claim 23, wherein said database is provided by a television program ratings service.

32. The method of claim 22, wherein monitoring which of said plurality of programs the user views comprises identifying program requests made by the user while watching television.

33. The method of claim 32, wherein said program requests are identified at the set-top box of an interactive television.

34. The method of claim 32, wherein said program requests are identified at the iTV Service Provider point of presence.

35. The method of claim 34, wherein said program requests are associated with a user and stored in a database.

36. The method of claim 22, wherein developing a profile of a user comprises updating an existing user profile.

37. The method of claim 36, wherein developing a profile of a user comprises combining the profiles of programs viewed by the user to the existing user profile using an averaging algorithm.

38. The method of claim 37, wherein said user profile includes data on a plurality of demographic categories, each associated with a rating, and the method further comprises filling in a value for the rating for any demographic category having a low confidence measure.

39. The method of claim 38, wherein filling in a value comprises using an average rating of persons having similar profiles to that of said user for a category having a low confidence measure.

40. The method of claim 39, wherein said average rating is determined using a clustering algorithm.

41. The method of claim 22, further comprising erasing records of which programs said user has viewed after developing the user's profile.

42. The method of claim 22, further comprising matching selective advertising to said user based on his or her profile.

43. The method of claim 42, wherein delivering selective advertising comprises transmitting a pop-up advertisement to a display of a television operated by the user.

44. The method of claim 42, wherein delivering selective advertising comprises transmitting a video advertisement in the programming stream to the display of a television operated by the user.

45. The method of claim 22, further comprising providing program recommendations to the user based on the profile of the user.

46. The method of claim 45, wherein the program recommendations are based on viewing habits of users with profiles similar to the profile of the user.

47. The method of claim 45, wherein the program recommendations are generated upon a request by the user.

48. The method of claim 45, wherein the program recommendations are generated automatically when the user turns on a television.

49. The method of claim 45, wherein the program recommendations are presented in the form of a program guide that presents the user's favorite programs first.

50. A set-top box for profiling an iTV user, comprising:

a memory for storing a program; and

a processor operative with the program to:

(a) monitor which of a plurality of programs the user views; and

(b) develop a profile of the user based on predetermined profiles of the programs viewed by the user.

51. The set-top box of claim 50, further comprising a database associating each of said plurality of television programs with demographic characteristics of persons viewing said programs.

52. The set-top box of claim 50, further comprising a database in which program requests of the user and associated user information are stored.

53. The set-top box of claim 50, wherein said processor includes means for erasing records of which programs said user has viewed after developing the profile of the user.

54. The set-top box of claim 50, wherein said processor further transmits selective advertising to said user based on the profile of the user.

55. The set-top box of claim 54, wherein said advertising comprises a pop-up advertisement to be displayed on an iTV of the user.

56. The set-top box of claim 50, wherein said set-top box cooperates with an iTV operated by the user to display an advertisement on the iTV, said advertisement being selected from a plurality of advertisements based on the profile of the user.

57. A computer for profiling an iTV user, comprising:

a memory for storing a program; and

a processor operative with the program to:

(a) monitor which of a plurality of programs the user views; and

(b) develop a profile of the user based on predetermined profiles of the television programs viewed by the user.

58. The computer of claim 57, wherein said computer comprises an ISP point of presence server.

59. A system for delivering selective advertising to an iTV user, comprising:

a database containing profile data on a plurality of iTV programs;

means for monitoring which of said plurality of iTV programs the user accesses;

means for developing a profile of the user using profile data of the iTV programs accessed by the user; and

means for matching the user with an advertisement based on the developed user profile.

60. A system for delivering targeted advertisements to a client iTV of a user, comprising:

a local server computer for providing iTV access to the user;

a set-top box at the client iTV linked to the local server computer, the set-top box

including means for monitoring which of a plurality of iTV programs the user accesses and means for developing a profile of the user based on predetermined profile data of iTV programs accessed by the user;

a remote server computer linked to said local server computer and including means for providing an advertisement to a desired user based on the profile of the desired user and means for transmitting said advertisement to said local server computer for eventual transfer to the set-top box; and

wherein the set-top box further contains means for matching the advertisement with the profile of the user.

61. The system of claim 60, wherein said local server computer includes a local database containing data associating a plurality of iTV programs with predetermined profile data on the iTV programs.

62. The system of claim 60, wherein said means for monitoring comprises identifying program requests made by the user while viewing iTV.

63. The system of claim 60, wherein the set-top box further comprises means for monitoring how long the advertisement is displayed to the user.

64. A computer readable medium comprising a program for profiling an iTV user by performing the acts of:

monitoring which of a plurality of ITV programs having predetermined profiles the user accesses; and

developing a profile of the user based on the profiles of the ITV programs accessed by the user.

65. The computer readable medium of claim 64, wherein the medium comprises a removable memory.

66. The computer readable medium of claim 64, wherein the medium comprises a signal transmission.

67. A computerized method of profiling iTV users and selectively delivering content to said users, comprising:

providing profiles of a plurality of iTV programs, said profiles including demographic data of persons known to have viewed the iTV programs;

monitoring which of said plurality of iTV programs each of said users visits;

inferring a profile of each user based on the profiles of the iTV programs visited by the user;

identifying a target group of said users who would be receptive to receiving certain content based on the profiles of the target group; and

selectively delivering the content to users of the target group.

68. The computerized method of claim 67, further comprising adjusting the target group to optimize user responsiveness to the content.

69. A program module for a set-top box, comprising:

a sniffer for gathering user-requested content information from iTV interactions of a user;

a profiler for correlating content-associated profile information from a rating service with the user-requested content information and for developing a profile of the user; and

a matcher for recommending content to the user based on the profile of the user.